

X-Treme Book Launch Speech

If I were to give you a ream of blank paper would you think of it as an opportunity to write? If I said that I wanted you to read a billion Webpages would you freak out? Most people would be immediately put off by such challenges, because they seem like climbing Mount Everest. When I was a child I enjoyed cycling and where I lived everything was flat and I mean really flat, to us a railway bridge was a big hill. If you'd said that when I was 18 I'd be expected to cycle up 1000 feet everyday it would have seemed insurmountable and yet many people are told of impossible expectations? Rather than be given a guide book as to how to achieve their dreams. That is why I wrote X-Treme Creative Writing and X-Treme Speed Reading.

These two books are written for the digital age where knowledge, application and creativity are the keys to success and financial rewards. Let us firstly look at X-treme Speed Reading. Reading is a core skill that we start to learn at school, is absolutely essential at university and demanded in most workplaces.

Most of us learn basic reading skills and can read at the rather sedate speed of about 100 words per minute. People generally don't believe that there are those out there who can read not just a little bit faster than them, but a lot faster. They believe that just by practising the same old techniques they will increase their speed. It is as if they do not know about the gear stick in a car and believe that 20 kilometres an hour is an excellent speed. X-Treme Speed Reading explains the other gears in reading and takes us from gear 1 to gear 5!

The first difficulty is that people often pick up some bad habits So let us have a look at a few of these habits and how they could be affecting your reading speed.

Reading Out Loud, many children's reading abilities are tested by reading out loud and this is fine if we want to test a child's ability to pronounce the words, but it does not test comprehension and worse it can leave a nasty side-effect: sub-vocalisation, the voice inside people's heads. If you can hear that voice now as you read, then I am afraid your Ferrari of a brain is being kept in gear 1.

Using Your Hands, Some of us were told NOT to use our hands when reading, so we were expected to track our reading by simply looking at the page. Your hands are a great metronome and cannot only keep track of where you are but also encourage you to speed up your reading.

Once these problems have been highlighted X-Treme Speed Reading then shows us the techniques to improve reading from basic reading techniques such as: Skimming, scanning and hand techniques through to more sophisticated speed reading techniques such as chunking and comprehension speed challenges. Once you have mastered the basics the book takes you further into reading for research, reading for memorisation and finally how to read information on the Internet.

One of the key differences between this and other books is that it takes into consideration people who do not use English as their first language and the techniques have been carefully graded according to vocabulary so everybody can benefit and as they learn to read more they will be able to take on the more sophisticated techniques available and in time you will become an expert reader.

Now Let's have a look at X-Treme Creative Writing. Once somebody has an idea as to how to read, the next step is for them to write and that is where X-Treme Creative Writing comes in. X-Treme Creative Writing is about removing barriers and getting people to write. In fact not just authors benefit from writing skills, these skills are needed in a large number of jobs: scientists, business and sales people, trainers,

Business

lawyers among many others...Creativity is key to most well paid jobs and this is a trend set to continue as PCs become more capable of mundane tasks.

My specific aim in this book was to lower the barriers to creative Writing. Not everybody is going to be the next J K Rowling or a full time author, but everybody can write something useful, interesting and something that will enhance their job prospects. Yet many people do not even try...

That is why in this book, jargon has been carefully removed and literary examples come from a plethora of media including: Television, film, computer games, the web and of course books. Once the snobbery has been taken away a child as young as eight can begin their creative journey...

Once on the journey we will learn about the three key aims of creative writing: to entertain, to convince and to educate and from there the book gives people a framework to work on key areas of writing.

The book starts with characters, which are essential to any narrative piece and provides key shortcuts to understanding what makes a good character and how to go about creating somebody with individuality that a reader will want to read about. From there it moves onto the double edged sword of descriptions, locations and colour. These essential elements are described in careful detail with advice on how to handle them in different genres.

Once you have planned solid characters and locations you are now ready to learn about plots. If you've watched television you will not be surprised to hear that relatively few plot devices are really original. In fact even great people such as Shakespeare rarely wrote entirely original pieces. In fact Romeo and Juliet was largely based on Matteo's "Giulietta e Romeo" and Shakespeare didn't even take the trouble to change the Italian city of Verona... X-Treme creative writing introduces you to the majority of basic plot lines and encourages you to make them your own.

These are the basic components of good story writing, but the book also touches on persuasive writing which is often why many good writers want to write. Whether it is Animal Farm or the Crucible in fiction or more straight forward persuasive pieces, being able to persuade your reader of your viewpoint is key to many writers' success and certainly most politicians. The book also covers verse, Rap, Hip hop, short stories and finally two of the most daunting of art forms....Novel and script writing.

X-treme Creative Writing does not shy away from the online world and shows how even younger writers can get their work published almost instantly and how email has replaced letters as the medium of choice for communicating with pen-pals or should that be keyboard-pals?

For parents and teachers concerned about passing exams, will these books help? Yes the techniques shown in X-Treme Speed Reading will ensure a student's ability to study in a more effective manner when revising, to research more effectively and read more quickly during the exam itself. Essential for SPM 1119, TOEFL iBT, IELTS and MUET. X-Treme Creative Writing will show you how to beat the SPM 1119 exam and other English writing exams, more than that it will help you at work, because you will know how to write in a convincing manner.

These books provide a solid foundation in English reading and writing that will benefit children for life, students in their degrees and adults in their careers. These books embrace the 21st century, enhance key skills and take you to the X-Treme!